DVC Navigation Canal to be located about ten miles from the location of Chachai bridge under construction of DVC, is under consideration of Govt.;

(b) if so, whether Govt, have prepared the f&sbiility report and by when the bridge is likely to be completed; and

(c) whether requests have been received for replacement of the existing damaged ferry boats and to increase the fleet of boats till such time the proposed foot bridge is constructed; if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENERGY (SHRI BABANRAO DHAKANE): (a) and (b) No scheme is pending with the Central Government for the construction of foot bridge at Pandua over the DVC Navigation Canal. The Damodar Valley Corporation had been receiving a number of requests in this regard and feasibility report was obtained by them. However, the Corporation is not in a position to take up such work due to financial constraints at present.

(c) The country boats are repaired/ replaced as and when required. A bigger and better beat is being used since August, 1990.

Lifting of *ban* on use of non-iodised salt

1164. SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state.

(a) whether the Academy of Nutrition Improvement, Nagpur has been urging for proper scientific study and debate on the question of iodisation of common salt;

(b) whether they have urged for lifting of ban on sale of common salt (non-iodised) in States/areas which are not identified as 'goitre prone' areas;

(c) whether the iodisation of salt and ban on sale of non-iodised salt cause hike in the price of salt and making it beyond the reach of the poor; and

(d) whether Government are reviewing the policy on 'iodisation' of common salt in the face of strong opposition from nutritional experts and scientific community?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (PROF. SHA-KEELUR REHMAN): (a) and (b) Yes.
The Academy of Nutrition Improvement has been invited for debate on the question of Iodisation of salt at the highest level by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. A scientific meeting of eminent experts in the field of Iodine --Deficiency Disorders was also held with the representatives of the Academy of Nutrition Improvement under the auspices of Indian Council of Medical Research where detailed discussions on various issues raised by the Academy were held. The Academy was informed that there were no adverse effects of Universal Salt Iodisation. It is only a preventive measure against IDD which is found to be prevalent in almost very region of the country, as revealed from the multicentric scientific studies conducted by tre ICMR. This study supports the decision of the Govt, of India for Universal Salt Iodisation.

(c) The retail price of salt vary widely depending upon the for price of salt insalt producing centres, quality of salt, whether powdered or not, cost of packing and repacking charges, freight, handling charges at both ends, shortage for godowns, wholesalers and retailers commission. It is the best quality of salt which is invariably iodised and pack ed in polythene bags for retail sale, and additional cost of iodisation is only 2 to 3 paise per kg. However more than 70 per cent of the Iodised salt is still being sold in lease and its retail price is comparable to that of common salt of similar quality.

(d) At present there is no proposal to review the policy of Universal

Salt lodisation Scheme. No adverse efforts on account of consumption of Iodised salt have come to the notice of the Government of India. On the contrary results of Longitudinal studies conducted in Kangra Valley of Himachal Pradesh by Prof. Ramalingaswami (Retd., D. G., ICMR) etc. have clearly revealed the effectiveness of Iodised salt in reduction of Goitre and other Iodine Deficiency Disorder. The experts in the field of Goitre and other IDDs have supported the policy of Universal Salt lodisation. There are 22 other countries in the Woild which have successfully prevented the problem of Goitre through Universal Salt lodisation.

Discriminatory circular issued by AIR India

1165. SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE:
SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Air Hostesses of Air India, their Association, the Air Corporations Employees Union, Trade Unions and Women's Organisations jhave protested against AIR INDIA'S November 2, 1990 Circular which prohibits an Air Hostess from flying duty after the age of 45; and

(b) if so, whether Government propose to review the matter and withdraw the said discriminatory circular?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI HARMOHAN DHAWAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The circular is not discriminatory and there is no proposal to withdraw it.

Losses incurred by State Electricity Boards

1166. SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Will the Minister of ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the State Electriticy Boards have incurred losses to the tune of Rs. 12, 000 crores during the Seventh Plan period; and

(b) if so, what steps are under consideration of Government to minimise the commercial losses by the State Electricity Boards in the Eighth Plan period?

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR ENERGY (SHRI BABANRAO DHAKANE): (a) No, Sir. Losses have been estimated at Rs. 2172 crores.

(b) Steps taken to improve the performance of the State Electricity Boards include amendment to the statute requiring the Boards to earn return of 3 per cent surplus on fixed assets and making theft of power cognizable offence; implementation of Centrally sponsored renovation and modernisation schemes for uprating the performance of the thermal power stations; introduction of meritrious productivity reward scheme for improved performance. The need to improve the financial position of the SEBs has been emphasised to the State Government from time to time and for taking steps like resorting to equity participation, subsidizing the losses for supply of power to the agricultural secotr, revision of tariff etc.

AIR traffic congestion over Northern Bay of Bengal

1167. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:
SHRI BEKAL UTSAHI:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the air traffic congestion problems over northern Bay of Bengal of the sub continent; and

(b) if so, what efforts Goveinment are making to improve he situation?